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THE LADIES' GUILD.

WHEN society began to emerge out of the darkness of the Iron Age, the gentler sex enjoyed its fair share of the elevation. Women, indeed, received from chivalry even an undue predominance, and the strength and valour of men crouched, as if with the fabulous instinct of the lion, at the feet of beauty. The women of that time, however, are not correctly appreciated in ours. It is the custom to regard them as mere painted puppets, set up by the fantastic spirit of the age as a mark for skill or bravery, and with no more authentic claims to our respect than the silken banner of the joust, where they 'ruined influence and adjudged the prize.' It is not generally known, or is always forgotten, that that very banner was worked by female fingers, and that many of the luxurious trappings of chivalry, which contributed more to the advancement of society than the gallant but foolish blood that bespattered them, owed their existence to female industry and ingenuity. Even so early as the eleventh century, the women of England were so famous for embroidery that in that age it was called 'English work,' just as in ancient times it was 'Phrygian work;' and among others we read of Matildis, an English-woman, distinguished for her skill in dyeing purple, and adorning robes with gold, gems, paintings, and flowers.

In the following century this reputation continued, and the names of the fair workwomen which have come down to us belong always to the aristocratical class. Christina, Princess of Margate, who lived in the year 1189, was a capital hand at such matters; and a mitre and pair of sandals which she embroidered were declared to be perfect 'wonders.' They were presented by the abbot of St Albans to the pope of that day; and thus the loftiest head and holiest toe in Europe were clothed by English female industry.

In the fourteenth century, however, we arrive at a more interesting epoch, when women stand prominently out among the ingatherers of that true harvest of the Crusades, which consisted in the establishment of industry upon the ruins of feudalism. The knights had been beggared by their extravagance; property had changed hands; and skilled artificers of all kinds felt themselves to be men—that is, when they were not women. But a great proportion of them were women; and as such they inherited, in a modified manner, the immunities bestowed by chivalry upon their grandmothers, and were allowed privileges forbidden to the men. Male artificers were tied down to one profession; but the same law secured the liberty of women—a liberty which they seem to derive from the

charter of nature itself—to do as they thought fit. A man was fixed for life to his loom, or his anvil, or his last; but a woman might try the whole circle of the trades till she found one to her taste, and then go round again out of sheer feminine love of variety. In the records of those gallant days we find female brewers, bakers, weavers, spinners, embroiderers, and others employed in various works in wool, linen, and silk. They were distinguished by the female termination *ster*: thus a brewster, backster, webster, means a woman who brews, bakes, weaves.

In the middle of the fifteenth century the female manufacturers in weaving, carding, spinning, and other branches of industry, are particularised in a public document. This is a resolution of parliament, in which the prohibition of English cloths in the Netherlands is complained of as being hurtful to our industrious countrywomen. But sometimes parliament—so unlike the parliament of our own enlightened time!—required to be reminded of its duty; and in the year 1457 we find the silkwomen of London memorialising the legislature, in good-set terms, on the injury they sustained from the free importation of foreign goods of the kind by which they themselves got their living. We may fancy the meeting at which this memorial was got up—the resolutions, the speeches, the indignant appeals, the shrill screams of laughter, defiance, or applause! But the agitation was successful; and the parliament which had complained so pathetically of a similar step taken by the Low Countries, indulged the ladies with a prohibition in their turn. The same favour was shewn to them in the year 1463; but the time was now at hand when women should stand no more upon their industrial rights, real or supposed, but come before the country, when they came at all, in the character of victims, mendicants, and castaways.

It would be impossible to describe the process by which they were elbowed out of their employments by the other sex, because this was so gradual as to be hardly perceptible except in its results. But one curious circumstance attended it; namely, that when men installed themselves in the places of women, they retained the feminine appellations, and became brewsters, backsters, websters, and so on. One only of the names remained peculiar to the fair sex—spinsters; and the law to this day appears to suppose the word to designate an employment followed by all unmarried women.

The chivalry which in one age made women objects of worship, and in another age removed the interdictions from their industry which shackled that of the men, has changed its form in ours, but not its character. We take them now entirely upon our own hands.

We consider work—except among the lower classes—a kind of degradation; and no matter how many of them may fall to our lot as individuals, we feel bound in honour to bring them up in idleness. This is very generous no doubt, but it is the ignorant, unreflecting generosity of a *preux chevalier*. It fancies that there is no change, no death in the world; it stakes the very subsistence of the objects of our solicitude upon a single hazard; it throws them for life upon sympathy, forbearance, kindness; and it accustoms them so much both to the idea and the reality of dependence, that in frequent cases many years of the higher spirits of the sex pass away in a hopeless but bitter and indignant struggle with what they conceive to be their social destiny. As for spirits of the commoner kind, their time and thoughts are occupied with the change from one dependence to another, which is the only consummation offered to their hopes. Marriage with them is the grand alternative; but marriage too seldom accompanied by that which truly consecrates it—the spontaneous love of the proud and free.

The exemption of women from the law of work is in certain classes in England one of the greatest of our social evils; and it is the more puzzling that it seems to have grown out of the advancing civilisation of the time. In our own immediate day, however, a kind of reaction seems to be at its commencement. We hear of some female authors by profession, some female artists, engravers, decorators of various kinds; there are likewise actresses and singers, who by their private characters give respectability as well as beauty to their branch of art; and there are constantly advertisements appearing—many of them fraudulent no doubt, but still indications of the turn the public mind is taking—offering professions to gentlemen by which they may be able to support themselves in independence. All this, however, bespeaks as yet only the necessity of the case, and the craving for relief it elicits; for in reality no perceptible change has taken place in society. What is wanted is a more open agitation of the question of female employment, and an example offered in the respectable middle classes, of a nature fit to dispel for ever the prejudices which render the position of woman in society so sad and so anomalous.

For this reason we have been as much interested by the prospectus of an association called the Ladies' Guild as we were a short time since by that of the Literary Guild. The prospectus complains that hitherto almost the only resource of educated women has been tuition, and proposes a 'novel and interesting plan,' by which combination may accomplish 'what individual effort could never achieve.' This plan is for ladies to assemble in a school of instruction in London, where, for the nominal sum of two shillings per week (to meet necessary expenses) they may become mistresses of a certain decorative art, protected by patent, and their productions in which will be sold for their own benefit. Ladies in the provinces are likewise invited to this common centre, where they may form an associated home in connection with the Guild, and thus 'live at a far less cost than any individual can do in a separate position.* There is something extremely seductive in this idea; and if Miss Wallace, the amiable and gifted patentee, who consecrates the fruits of her genius to the disenthralment of her countrywomen, were but as correct in her political economy as she is in her philanthropy, it might even be regarded as the solution of a great problem. But unluckily the production referred to, however beautiful and elegant, is a thing of mere taste and fashion; and even were it otherwise, there is no such thing as forcing an article into general consumption. In its unlimited invitation to lady-workers, the Guild,

to use a homely phrase, puts the cart before the horse: it produces supply before demand has arisen. It is not too late, however, to remedy this inadvertence. Let the number of ladies be strictly limited at first, and a fair trial given to the manufacture; and when the demand increases, so far from there being any difficulty in meeting it, the supply will seem to come of nature and necessity.

Although the Ladies' Guild, however, cannot be considered to meet the exigencies of the time, it goes a certain way towards it: it is that most important of all stages—the first step. It countenances female industry, and it offers a field for it which may prove—and we hope will prove—of considerable magnitude. The substance Miss Wallace works in is luckily of a kind to disarm many feminine prejudices; for the gentility of the work is unquestionable. Even in the fourteenth century, when the first manufactory was established in France by permission of Philip de Valois, it was considered that persons of the best families might follow the employment without losing caste. This idea was confirmed by the government itself, for in public deeds such manufacturers were styled 'gentlemen of the art and science of glass-making;' and the privilege of forming one of these establishments was bestowed upon a person near Lyons as a reward for military services rendered at the battle of Agincourt. We must not, however, be betrayed by these circumstances into forming any extravagant notion of the article then produced. It was nothing more than window-glass that was achieved by these 'gentlemen,' and that only in round plates, with a *boudine* or eye in the middle, affording at the utmost a square of eight inches. The colour of this glass was yellowish, variegated here and there with bubbles; and it is supposed that the desire to hide such deformities originated the custom of painting the small squares framed in lead, which formed the church windows.

The Ladies' Guild, however, have now very different materials to work upon; and we may form some idea of the results produced under Miss Wallace's patent from the following description taken from our contemporary, 'The Builder':—

'All our ideas of Oriental splendour—all the gorgeous imaginings of Orientals themselves, might now be realised to sight at least in the sober actualities of British decorative art in glass. The lustre of silver and gold, the fiery sparkle of the ruby, amethyst, and every actual or imaginable gem, and the more subdued, but no less beautiful hues of the pearl and the tropical shell, may now, by the recent efforts of British skill and invention, be combined at a moderate cost, and without a vestige of mere gaudy glitter, in the decorations of the mansions of the gentlemen of England. Miss Wallace's productions consist, in principle, of imitations of gold and silver in glass, without the use of either metal; of the protection of actual gilding or silvering under an almost invisible yet magnifying coat of glass; of a peculiar mode of adding metallic and pearly brilliancy to colours, to painted and stained figures, and to engravings, all in glass; of imitations of marbles, alabaster, malachite, &c., in glass-covered compositions; of imitations of precious stones; and of other inventions.

'Among the various forms under which these are brought into use, in architectural decoration, are those of ceilings, in which a combination of them with a peculiar mode of enamelling in white or pale blue on the inner surface of the interspaces in glass (another of this lady's numerous inventions also applied with good effect to framed engravings) is capable of producing a dazzling effect, particularly by night, with a good or even an indifferent light reflected from it. Mouldings and cornices are made to harmonise with these effects; and the same combinations, varied with the pearly brilliance of painted flower-wreaths, and wreaths

* The school is at No. 4 Russell Place, Fitzroy Square, where applications are to be made, addressed to Mrs Hill, Vice-President of the Ladies' Guild.

of silver engraved on a gold surface, all in glass, are made to adorn the walls in form of picture-frames. Besides a number of these productions in varied detail, we saw a specimen of stained-glass decoration for windows in form of armorial bearings, in vivid colours, made peculiarly sparkling and brilliant, and in some phases pearly, by one of the processes already alluded to. One great feature in most of the inventions is, that they are all protected, mostly within hollow mouldings of glass hermetically sealed, so that the gilding, &c. can never tarnish, and the whole is in this respect everlasting. So is it with the marble imitations, which are so firmly embedded in composition that they are said to be quite well adapted to all the risk of exterior construction for which they are designed, as well as for chimney-pieces and other forms of interior decoration.*

This new and brilliant art, it will be seen, displaces no other. Its productions are additions to the list of elegances demanded by a refined and luxurious age, and their application is so various—so almost universal—that the institutors of the Ladies' Guild are not unjustifiable in imagining that they have opened out to women of the middle classes a wide and elegant profession. Let them take care, however, say we, of their first step. No trade can be forced; and it will be much safer and kinder to invite ladies into the field as they are wanted, than to collect a multitude in the metropolis to work on the speculation of a market.*

A TALE OF DAYS NOT LONG GONE BY.

THERE resided some years ago in London a young surgeon named Gerald Spencer. He was the younger son of a gentleman of good family but small fortune; and as everything that remained to the father was entailed on the eldest son, a good professional education was all that Gerald could expect from his father, and it was all he got. But in the matter of education nothing was spared; and as Gerald had both the will and the ability to profit by the instructions he received, there was great reason to hope for a successful professional career. It is often a good thing for a young man to have nobody to rely on but himself. Those who have something to fall back upon hope to do and may do; but he *must do or die*; and this stern alternative quickens a man's wits, and lends amazing vigour to his energies. Gerald felt the full force of the necessity; and all the more, that he was deeply in love with the daughter of one of his father's neighbours. He had known Lucy Manwaring from her childhood, for she was six years his junior, and he had loved her ever since he was old enough to know what love was. But though she was the daughter of a gentleman, like himself she had nothing but her personal qualifications to recommend her. These, however, were considerable, for she was both amiable, pretty, and intelligent, and, above all, devotedly attached to her lover, respecting whose talents she was quite enthusiastic.

* Some years ago, a paragraph suggesting wood-engraving as an employment for females was transferred into this Journal from the 'Westminster Review.' Carried thus into the hands of the great multitude of the middle classes, who form our weekly audience, it seemed immediately to excite the hopes of a vast number of women who felt the disadvantage of the forced idleness to which they are restrained by society. The host of letters we received on the subject, chiefly inquiring by what means the fair writers could be introduced to such an employment, gave us an impression which will not soon be effaced, of the extent of the social evil in question. We wish to speak moderately when we say, that no article ever appeared in this Journal which excited one-fourth so much sensation as appeared to arise from this small quoted paragraph. Literally, years passed before the correspondence produced by it was at an end. We fear that it led in only a few instances to any useful result.—Ed.

'You may not think Gerald a sufficiently good match for me now, papa,' she would say; 'but I know the day will come that you will be proud to call Gerald your son-in-law!'

'That may be: I do not dispute Mr Spencer's talents; but in the meantime he has no money; and however clever a young man may be, it is often years before he gets into practice.'

'Very well, papa; we are in no hurry. I don't think it will be so long as you expect before Gerald makes his way. Such talents as his cannot long remain unknown; but as I said just now, we are in no hurry; and he would be quite as averse to our marriage taking place prematurely as you would be. He said only the last time he was here, that till he had a comfortable home to offer me, he would never mention the subject to you.'

'Very well, Lucy, so much the better; only don't let him mention it to you either; and take care you have not to wait for him till all the bloom is off your cheeks.'

'I'm not afraid, papa,' answered Lucy; 'but even if it were so, Gerald would love me just the same, and we could be very happy without the bloom.'

Secure of his love and sanguine of success, Gerald thought he could wait too: bright anticipations of the future lent a charm to labour that was to be so sweetly rewarded; and after studying at Paris and *VENICE*, and rendering himself in all respects worthy of the public patronage he counted on, with the assistance of his father he took a small house in the neighbourhood of Golden Square, and with a brass-plate on the door announcing his name and profession, he sat down to wait for patients; and patients came, not a few, betwixt nine and eleven o'clock, when it was understood he was at home; but alas, how seldom did one of them bring a guinea in his hand! They were all paupers or next to it—people whom he had attended in the hospitals, or such as were sent by these; for, enthusiastic in his art, he had willingly and carefully investigated and ministered to the maladies of the poor, and when they learned where he was to be found, they crowded to his door. And he was content to see them—they offered subjects for study and improvement; but there would be no getting on without a few rich ones too: how else was he to pay his rent, and have a home for Lucy? However, there was nothing to do but to wait and hope, and he did both—wearing though such waiting is to a man eager to rise, and who knows he has the capacity to do so, if he could once get his foot on the ladder.

The disappointments and anxieties that have attended the early career of many a man who has afterwards risen to eminence, have been so frequently described that they need not be dwelt upon here: it is enough to say that poor Gerald Spencer endured them all; and as he had spoken with confidence of his certain success both to his own friends and his mistress, it was doubly mortifying to find his performance falling so far short of his promise, that the first year he was obliged to apply to his father for money to pay his rent—a favour that was not granted without some vexatious allusions to the large sums that had been spent on an education which it was high time should produce its harvest. But still the rich drove past his door, flying for relief to men whose established reputations inspired hope and confidence, whilst he was exercising all his skill on patients who had nothing but blessings to give him in return. But although blessings are indeed blessed things, they will not furnish a man's table nor pay his rent, still less can he marry upon them; and the young surgeon's heart grew sick with disappointment as his hopes faded from day to day.

'Yes,' he would say to himself with bitterness, 'when the present generation have died off; when Astley Cooper, and Cline, and all the rest of them, are gone; when I am fifty years old, and Lucy Manwaring is

married to somebody else—for how can I expect her to wait for me all her life?—and is perhaps the mother of a dozen children, I shall get into practice and drive my carriage. I had better have been born a day-labourer than be the son of a gentleman with an empty purse, and talents I can find no opportunity of exercising.'

His position was so difficult too, for his pride forbade him to tell the whole truth; and whilst he was holding out fallacious hopes to his mistress, he found them as far as ever from realisation.

Amongst the young students of medicine he had become acquainted with about the hospitals was one called O'Grady. He was an Irishman, as his name indicated; apparently of low birth, without connections, and with little talent or industry. Neither did he evince any ambition or desire to rise. He seemed either conscious that he was born for mediocrity or content with a little; but that little he never appeared to want. Yet those who had known him longest had understood from himself that he had no private resources, but had come to London to trade on his talents and education, like many amongst them. It occurred to Gerald sometimes to wonder how he contrived to live; whether he might not have fallen into some inferior line of practice that paid in some degree—a practice that, in perspective, he would himself have scorned, but ~~but~~ he would be too glad to take anything he could get. With the view of finding out O'Grady's secret he cultivated his society, which, from not liking him, he had originally rather avoided. When the Irishman saw him disposed to be civil, he shewed himself ready enough to meet him half way; and one day, as they quitted one of the hospitals together, he invited him to dine with him at an eating-house he frequented in the neighbourhood.

The dinner was not in the grand style, but it was plentiful; and O'Grady called for a bottle of wine to relish it—a luxury the latter was little accustomed to.

'Upon my word, O'Grady,' said he, 'you make it out capitally if this is the style you live in every day. I don't know how it is, but though I get plenty of patients I never get a fee.'

'Nor I either,' said O'Grady. 'Why, man, if I depended on fees, I should not get butter to my bread.'

'Oh! I beg your pardon,' said Gerald; 'you have doubtless some private resources. Fortunate man, say I! I wish I had.'

O'Grady did not deny the imputation, and so the matter rested for that time; but as either for motives of his own, or from good-nature, he not unfrequently invited Gerald to share his dinner, the intimacy continued till a degree of confidence was established between them that led to momentous results.

'As for my getting into practice here, I look upon it as out of the question, without some extraordinary lucky hit,' said O'Grady one day. 'I mean by and by to go back to old Ireland, where, in some miserable hole or another, I shall settle down as a country doctor, and spend the rest of my life astride of the sharp backbone of an Irish horse. But you ought to get into practice: you have not only abilities but industry; and there isn't a man amongst us who has a better right to get on than you have.'

'And yet this ability and industry you are pleased to attribute to me will scarcely find me in bread and cheese. And the hard part of it is, that when fortune turns her back upon a man in this manner in the beginning of life, one can't—at least I can't—afford to wait till she is in better humour. I suppose practice may come by and by, when I am forty or fifty years of age; but how am I to live and keep up appearances in the meantime?'

'If I had your gift of the gab,' said O'Grady, 'and knew as much about the thing as you do, I'd give lectures on anatomy. In that way you'd get known.'

'But who'd come to them? That is, who'd pay to come to them?—and without fees I couldn't do it.'

'I'll tell you what would bring you fees.'

'What?'

'Not talking alone, I admit; but get subjects—shew 'em what you teach, and you'll get plenty of students to come to you, I warrant.'

'I daresay. But how am I to get subjects? Why, K— gave forty pounds for one lately.'

'I know that,' answered O'Grady; 'but there are ways of doing it;' and then, with his elbows on the table, he leaned across, and in a low voice communicated to Gerald the secret he alluded to.

At that time, and it is not so very many years since these circumstances occurred, surgeons were expected, as much as now, to be acquainted with all the mysteries of the human frame, whilst the legislature placed every impediment in the way of their diving into its secrets. There was no provision made for supplying them with subjects, whilst to obtain them by violating the graveyards was an unlawful act. Of course, however, they were so obtained; many a man lived by the trade, and the surgeons were under the necessity of countenancing the crime, or of remaining in ignorance of what they were bound to know. Some of the dire consequences of this short-sighted legislation became known to the world, and we have a verb adopted into our vocabulary which will carry down the legend to posterity; but it is well understood that there were many more deaths by *burking* in different parts of the kingdom, especially in London, than ever became public, as also that the annals of the resurrectionists would record many strange escapes and frightful adventures.

But to return to our story. Shortly after the conversation alluded to betwixt Spencer and O'Grady, the former made known his intention of giving lectures on anatomy; indeed, he put advertisements into the papers to that effect, whilst it was secretly circulated amongst the students that a subject would be provided for each lecture. As the opportunities for practical observation were so limited as to render such occasions extremely desirable, and as the abilities of the lecturer were well known amongst students of medicine, he had even from the first a pretty good attendance; and their favourable report spreading, soon brought more, especially as the fee was moderate, till at length he could boast of a crowded audience. Of course every man present was aware that the subjects which formed the chief attraction were illegally procured; but it was everybody's interest to keep the secret, and nobody sympathises with laws that run counter to human necessities. So the lectures continued and flourished; and the fame they shed brought patients, till the young surgeon's fortunes improved so far, and promised so well for the future, that he ventured to make his proposals to Mr Manwaring; and the lovers being quite weary of living on protracted hope, they pleaded their own cause so energetically that the father's consent was won, and they were married.

On this event taking place, trusting that his practice would increase, and be sufficient to maintain himself and his wife, Mr Spencer resolved to abandon for ever those midnight expeditions with O'Grady, to which his pecuniary necessities had won him to consent, but which he had never undertaken without feelings of horror and disgust, as well as extreme apprehension of the disgrace of a discovery, which would have probably so far shocked the public as to do him irreparable mischief in his professional career.

For some little time, therefore, he depended on his legitimate profits to furnish funds for his family expenses; but these were not always sufficient, and an empty purse sometimes drove him to his old resources—resources, however, of which his wife remained wholly ignorant. That he gave lectures occasionally she knew, and that he was every now and then out great

part of the night with his friend O'Grady; but how they were employed, though she sometimes wondered, she was never told.

In the meantime Lucy, who having yet no child, had a great deal of time to herself, and who had been accustomed in the country to visit and minister to the poor of the neighbourhood, had joined a society of benevolent ladies, which had originated in a proposal of Mrs Fry and a sister of hers, Mrs Schimmelpenninck—a beautiful woman, who married a German, or rather, I believe, a Dutchman—for the purpose of visiting, improving, and relieving the poor of the metropolis. Each lady had her district appointed, and some of these spread over extremely bad neighbourhoods; but the founders of this society maintained that, in the very worst, there existed no danger for the visitor; and they themselves fearlessly set the example of going into quarters that less enthusiastic women would have certainly eschewed.

Lucy, however, was an enthusiast both in benevolence and religion; and she would have despised herself for refusing to follow where those she looked up to led. She therefore cheerfully accepted the district appointed to her, which was none of the best; and as experience seemed to confirm the opinion of the presiding ladies, she went amongst all sorts of people without fear—witnessing an immense deal of wretchedness, the consequence of an immense deal of vice, from which generally, though the least corrupted, the women were the deepest sufferers, and it was by them she was most gratefully received. Often when the men were sullen the wives expressed by their tears feelings they durst not otherwise give vent to—above all, when they saw their sick children relieved and comforted.

Amongst others there was a house in her district, the ground-floor of which was occupied by some people of the name of Vennell. The family consisted of a man and his wife, and two children; and although they lived in a great deal of dirt and muddle, and apparent wretchedness, they did not seem to be in any want, which was a circumstance the less to be expected that Vennell, from all she could learn, was an idle fellow, who followed no regular occupation, and his wife was a sickly woman, not fit for any.

On the whole it was a very unpromising sort of ménage; and on Lucy's first visit the woman received her so unconvivially, saying, amongst other things, that they wanted nothing of her, that she had not repeated it. Being informed, however, some time afterwards, that Mrs Vennell was very ill, she called, and found her in bed with a rheumatic fever; whereupon she not only sent the district physician to attend her, but being anxious to make an impression on the woman, who, from having rejected her ministrations, she concluded to be more than commonly in want of them, she returned frequently, carrying her such little comforts and indulgences as the funds of the society could afford, and often reading to her for an hour at a time by her bedside. The effect of all this kindness, however, was not very visible. The woman seemed to a certain degree grateful, but she was not softened. She continued close and reserved, and there was a dark ominous cloud ever on her brow that produced an involuntary impression against her. Nevertheless, Lucy, whose enthusiasm was only exalted by difficulties, felt that the worse Mrs Vennell's spiritual condition was the more she was bound to persevere in her efforts to ameliorate it; so she continued her visits, though by this time the woman was able to rise from her bed, and was fast recovering her usual state of health.

One afternoon, late in the month of October, in the year 1816, Lucy had been visiting her district, and finding she had a little wine to spare, which she thought would be an excuse for a call on Mrs Vennell, she went round that way. The woman was up, nursing one of

her children, both of whom were young; but she looked unusually sallow, and, as Lucy thought, the cloud on her brow lowered darker than ever.

'I've brought you a little wine to strengthen you,' she said; 'and as I have half an hour to spare I have something here I should like to read to you.'

'I'm obliged to you for the wine,' she answered; 'but I don't want the reading; it don't do me no good, but just makes me worse like.'

'No,' said Lucy; 'I'm sure what I read can't make you worse; but perhaps it makes you think yourself worse, and that's a good sign. We are in the way to mend when we see how bad we are.'

'I can't mend, and it's no use,' answered the woman; 'it's very well for them as is differently situated; but where one's lot's cast one must bide.'

'Nobody's lot is cast in wickedness,' answered Lucy.

'That's more than you can tell,' said the woman sullenly. 'You gentlefolks come among us, and bring us wine and doctor's stuff, and no doubt we ought to be thankful, for you're noways obligated to do it; but for your readings and your preachings they can't do us no good, 'cause our necessities is stronger than words printed upon paper, and when maybe we might wish to be better than we are, we can't; perhaps there's them as won't let us—sometimes want won't let us.'

'All that you say is very sad,' answered Lucy; 'but depend on it wickedness and impiety can never improve anybody's circumstances in the long-run, though it may seem so for a little while.'

'We poor folks ha'n't no time to look for'ards,' returned Mrs Vennell. 'We must find bread for ourselves and our children from one day to another, and if we can't get it by fair work we must get it which way we can.'

'But dishonest ways are like false friends, my good Mrs Vennell'—

'Don't call me good; what I am, I am: I'm no hypocrite.'

'And I like you the better for that, and I've the more hope of you.'

Mrs Vennell shook her head, and could not be brought to admit that there was any hope of her; but on the whole, in spite of this disavowal of amendment, Lucy's opinion of her was improved by these late opportunities of observation, and she inclined to think, from several obscure hints she had dropped, that her husband lived by some dishonest practices, in which the wife took her part more or less, though not without certain regrets and longings after a better state. What Vennell's occupation was she did not know: his wife said, in answer to her inquiries, that he *jobbed about*; but she had never yet happened to see him.

After some further conversation she took her leave, impressed with the idea that the woman was more than usually uneasy and desponding, and that it was not like the despondency arising from want or the apprehension of it, but more like the darkness of a spirit clouded by a troubled conscience. The door of the house opened into a dismal sort of lane, skirted on the opposite side by a dead-wall of no great height, which divided it from a churchyard: one of those churchyards in the heart of the metropolis about which so much has lately been written. As Lucy walked up the lane a man passed her, in company with a deformed lad, who was apparently extremely tipsy. The man was dressed like a labourer, and she looked back after him, wondering if it was Vennell. As she turned her head he turned too, and their eyes met for a moment; but the boy reeled about so distressingly that she hastened on to escape the disagreeable spectacle. Her thoughts a good deal occupied with the state of the woman she had left, she had reached the neighbourhood of her own home before she discovered that her bag was left behind. It was a tolerably capacious one which she usually took with her on these expeditions, as it would carry a small

bottle of wine, or any other little matters she wished to distribute; and as it happened, it contained on the present occasion about five pounds in money, most of it belonging to the society. The loss of it, therefore, would be serious; and although it was already late, and would involve her not being home at the usual dinner hour, she thought, considering where the thing was left, it would be better to return for it immediately; so she retraced her steps as rapidly as she could, entered the door of the house, which, for the convenience of its various inhabitants, stood always open, and groped her way, for it was now quite dark, towards Vennell's room, the door of which was ajar.

'What signifies?' said a man, as Lucy, hearing his voice, paused a moment, hesitating whether to go forward—'what signifies? I told you they wanted one for the lecture this evening, and there wasn't no time to stand shilly-shally. Set on the water to boil.'

'Why couldn't you get one out o' the same place as you got 'em afore?'

'Cause I only got the order this morning; and it ain't so easy, woman. There was a rumpus last night out at Islington, where them doctors was, and they was nigh taken; and that's why they sent to me. Make haste with the water, will you? They'll be here afore we're ready.'

Just as he said these words, and as Lucy, having no notion to what their conversation alluded, was about to advance into the room—whether it was chance, or whether he heard some sound that awakened his suspicions, Vennell turned his head and saw her standing in the passage. To rush out, seize her by the arm, drag her into the room, and close the door, was the work of an instant.

'Don't scream!' said the woman, darting forwards and laying her hand on Lucy's mouth—'don't scream, and you shan't be hurt!'

Lucy did not scream, but she answered with a trembling voice: 'I came back for my bag!'

'I know what you came back for,' said the man; 'I saw you awatching me in the lane just now.'

'Hush!' said the woman; 'she did leave her bag here. Let her go, John—she came for no harm.'

But the man stood sullenly grasping her arm. 'Sit down there!' he said, thrusting her towards a chair—'Sit you down there, I say. Make yourself at home since you are here!'

Terrified into silence, she obeyed, and he went behind her; the woman followed him, and presently she heard a struggle, but no words. An indescribable fear that some mischief was preparing for her made her turn her head, and as she did so her eye fell upon the bed, over which a sheet was spread, but under the sheet there lay a form that made her blood run cold, for she felt certain it was a corpse. At the same time the woman was holding the man's arm, and endeavouring to wrest something out of his hand: the room was lighted only by one dim candle, which shed its gloomy gleams upon this scene of horrors.

'No, John!' said the woman—'no: not if I die for it! She's come to see me, and brought me things through all my sickness!' But the man did not seem disposed to relinquish his purpose, whatever it was; when suddenly his wife made a thrust at him with all her strength, and threw him backwards on the bed.

'Run!' she cried to Lucy—'run!' making a gesture with her head towards the door. 'Turn the key this way; and as you've a soul to be saved, never tell what you've seen this night!'

The fugitive heard the last words as she fled along the passage into the lane; but the man was after her, and she was not six yards in advance of him when she heard the sound of wheels, and a hackney-coach passed. 'Save me—save me!' she cried in a frantic voice; but either the driver did not hear her, or he thought it was some drunken squabble which did not call for his

interference, so he drove forward; but the interruption seemed to have changed Vennell's purpose, for she presently reached the end of the lane unpursued, and making all the speed she could till she found herself in a less dangerous neighbourhood, she stepped into a coach, and arrived at home long after dinner-time more dead than alive. Mr Spencer, she was informed, had been at home, but was gone out to the lecture, very much surprised and somewhat alarmed at her absence. Exhausted and distressed, she went to bed, and waited his return. At eleven o'clock he came home very tired, for he had been out nearly the whole of the preceding night. His first words were words of displeasure: 'Why had she not been at home at dinner-time?'

'Tell me, Gerald,' she answered, 'where were you all last night?'

'What is that to you?' he asked.

'It's as much to me as it is to you to know where I have been this afternoon!'

'I beg your pardon, Lucy; I was out on business.'

'But I want to know what business.'

'My dear little wife, men have often business they cannot trust women with.'

'On this occasion, Gerald, I beseech you trust me! I never before made any inquiries about your midnight excursions with O'Grady, but now I have very strong motives for doing so.'

'What motives?'

'Motives that concern your safety!'

'My safety, Lucy!' he rejoined in some alarm; 'where is there any danger?'

'You were at Islington last night, Gerald!'

Mr Spencer, who had been sitting by the fire warming his feet, rose and walked to the bedside.

'Who told you so, Lucy? I hope you have not been induced by any ridiculous jealousy to spy into my business! If you have, I shall be very angry. It's a thing I could not put up with in a wife, however much I loved her.'

'I see I'm right,' she said, sitting up in bed and confronting him, with a pale and haggard countenance. 'I hoped I was not. I have been praying that my suspicions might be unfounded. You know a man called Vennell, Gerald?'

'Vennell! What do you mean?'

'A man that lives at the back of St S—— Church. He's a murderer!'

'Nonsense! I see your mistake. But what in the world has brought you in contact with Vennell?'

'There's no mistake: I tell you he's a murderer, and it's you that makes him one! You've been lecturing to-night?'

'Of course I have,' answered Mr Spencer, still incredulous, and still half angry.

'And you had what you call a—subject?'

'Well, if I had? I'll tell you what, Lucy,' he said sharply, 'if I hadn't had subjects, you wouldn't be Mrs Spencer; so mind your own business, and don't be foolish!'

'Oh Gerald, Gerald, how the love of gain blinds you to right and wrong! The man, Vennell, is a murderer, I say; and I shouldn't be here to tell you so now but for his wife, who enabled me to make my escape. If it hadn't been for her, you would perhaps have found a subject to-night on your dissecting-table you little looked for!'

'In the name of God, what do you mean, Lucy?' said Spencer, at length roused to a belief that there was something more in this agitation of hers than he had believed.

'Tell me, Gerald,' she said, 'was it a man or a woman you had to-night?'

'A man—at least, a boy.'

'I thought so,' said Lucy shuddering. 'A deformed boy?'

'Yes; a deformed boy! Why?'

Then amidst tears and anguish she told him all that had happened: how she had visited the woman, and how strange her demeanour had appeared; how she had met the man and the boy, and the state of intoxication the latter was in; how she had forgotten her bag and returned for it; and finally, how she escaped.

'His fears made him misinterpret my looking back at him; and when he saw me in the passage, he no doubt thought I had witnessed the murder. But I saw no blood,' she said; 'how was he killed?'

'Suffocated,' returned Mr Spencer; 'but I supposed by accident. It was I that was in the coach,' he said. 'I was going to fetch the body, and I remember hearing a woman cry, but I little imagined whose voice it was!'

'Let us be poor to the end of our days, Gerald,' said his wife, 'rather than get money by such unholy means!'

And Mr Spencer was sufficiently shocked and alarmed to follow her advice.

What to do about Vennell he did not know. If he accused him, the man had it in his power to make very unpleasant disclosures regarding himself and O'Grady; and besides, Lucy was extremely unwilling to implicate the unhappy wife. Finally, after some consultation, it was agreed to warn Vennell of his danger, and then to take such measures as would prevent a recurrence of the crime. But the discovery of Williams and his associates immediately afterwards led to a full exposure of these dreadful practices, and to a more judicious legislation, which put a stop to them by removing the motive.

Lucy's bag was returned, with all its contents safe, by Mrs Vennell, and the man I have called by that name was transported at the same time that Williams was executed. The young surgeon, whose real name is not of course here given, rose afterwards to considerable eminence in his profession, and, I believe, died within the last ten years.

TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE SUN.

THE total eclipse of the sun, which takes place on the 28th of this month, is one of those phenomena of nature which cannot be witnessed without the most intense interest. Partial eclipses of the sun, and even the great annular eclipse, which was so distinctly visible in this country in 1836, though highly imposing phenomena, are far inferior to the complete and total obscuration of that luminary. The event is described by those who have witnessed it as 'the most awfully grand that man can behold, and the most interesting,' because on that occurrence we are permitted a hasty glance at some of the secrets of nature which cannot be seen on any other occasion. When we read in ancient times of the two armies of the Lydians and Medes, even in the very midst of a furious battle, awe-struck and desisting from the combat at the obscuration of the sun, we cannot wonder that such a spectacle should deeply impress more refined and more intelligent observers.

Everybody knows that an eclipse of the sun is caused by the opaque body of the moon coming between us and the sun; but all are not aware of the difference of circumstances which causes at one time an annular and at another a total eclipse: these circumstances are, however, very easily explained. If you take a piece of white paper, cut it into a circle of about four inches diameter, and lay it on the table; then, standing before it, take a penny-piece, and shutting one eye, so place the coin between you and the paper that, looking at both with your open eye, you see the former cover the centre of the paper, and leave a white circle uncovered: this will represent the phenomenon of an annular eclipse. Then gradually move the penny-piece nearer and nearer your eye, till it comes to within about two feet, or to a point where the coin as now seen completely covers and

obscures the whole circumference of the paper circle: this will represent the phenomenon of a total eclipse. This experiment illustrates an invariable law of vision—that bodies near the eye appear larger than those at a distance; or, in other words, that objects diminish in size as they recede from the eye or centre of vision. Now the diameter of the sun is about 400 times larger than that of the moon, and the mean distance of the former luminary is about 400 times greater; so that the diameters of the sun and moon as seen by us are nearly the same. But as the earth's orbit is elliptical, with the sun in one of the foci or centres, at certain times the sun is nearer to us, and at other times more remote; consequently his diameter increases and diminishes somewhat to our sense of vision. It is the same with the moon. Her orbit is also elliptical, and, consequently, at certain periods of her revolution round the earth, she too appears with a larger disc than at others. When it so happens that a conjunction occurs between the sun and moon, at a period when the moon's disc is at its smallest and the sun's at its largest, then the moon will not entirely obscure the sun, but a small circular rim of this luminary will be visible: on the other hand, when the reverse position of these bodies occurs—that is, when the sun is at his greatest distance from us, and his disc the smallest, while the moon is at her nearest point to the earth, and her disc the largest—then a total eclipse of the sun is the consequence. As the greatest difference, however, occurs on the moon's disc, the occurrence of a total eclipse is mainly dependent upon her relative position. From the well-known laws of the moon's revolutions it is evident that eclipses, either of the sun or moon, can only be of occasional and comparatively rare occurrence. Still more rare must be the concomitant circumstances which bring about a total or even an annular eclipse.

The eclipse of next Monday will only be partial as seen in Britain; but over a portion of the continent of Europe it will be total. Entering Norway near Bergen, the shadow crosses both coasts of Norway, both coasts of Sweden, and the eastern coast of the Baltic; then ranges through Poland and the south frontier of Russia, across the Sea of Azof, through Georgia to the Caspian Sea. The following towns are thus within its range:—Christiania, Gothenburg, Carlscrona, Dantzic, Konigsberg, Warsaw, and Teflis. All these places are now of easy access to travellers; and no doubt, with the present facility of locomotion, many will indulge themselves in a view of the spectacle.

To those who witnessed the annular eclipse of 1836 we need not describe the general effect. The early congregation of people of all ages out of doors on a beautiful cloudless Sunday; the eagerness with which the first approach of the moon's dark disc was watched; the intense interest with which its gradual progress was marked; the awe which the pervading gloom and stillness as of approaching night excited; and the singular effect which this unusual interruption of the order of every-day nature had on the unreflecting brute creation—birds ceasing their song, deserting their feeding-ground, and flying to the thickets to roost—cattle looking up in dumb amazement to the portentous sky—and dogs whining and howling in terror!

M. Arago strikingly describes the total eclipse of 1842. The whole circumference of the moon was seen by him through his telescope while yet she had entered only about two-thirds of the sun's diameter. As the total eclipse approached, a strange fluctuation of light was seen both by Arago and others upon the walls and on the ground—so striking, that in some places children ran after it, and tried to catch it with their hands. Mr Airy, the astronomer-royal, describes the singular ring of light which surrounded the moon's circumference, commencing on the side of the moon opposite to that at which the sun disappeared. In some places this

ring or *corona* was seen double. Its texture appeared in some places as if fibrous or composed of entangled thread; in some places brushes or feathers of light proceeded from it. The appearance of this luminousness was very striking and unaccountable. The general opinion was, that it emanated from the sun; while more ancient writers have supposed it to be the atmosphere of the moon. 'In the general decay and disease which seemed to oppress all nature, the moon and the *corona* appeared almost like a local disease in that part of the sky.' But the most remarkable of all the appearances were the red mountains or flames apparently projecting from the circumference of the moon into the inner ring of the *corona*. These were seen and figured under different aspects by observers at various stations. The first impression was, that they were parts of the sun—elevations estimated at thirty thousand miles; but then the difference of form which they assumed as seen at different places became an objection to this theory. M. Faye conceives these appearances to be due to a sort of mirage or deception of vision.

Of the awful effect of the total obscuration, and of the suddenness with which it came on, it would be difficult to give an idea. The darkness is described as 'dropping down like a mantle;' the clouds seemed to be descending; the outlines of the horizon became indistinct, and sometimes even invisible; and a moral awe hung on the livid-looking countenances gazing around. The effect on the brute creation was also extraordinary. In one case a half-starved dog, which was voraciously devouring some food, instantly dropped it from his mouth when the darkness came on. In another a swarm of ants, which were busily carrying their burdens, stopped, and remained motionless till the light reappeared. A herd of oxen feeding in a field collected themselves into a circle, and stood with their horns outwards. Some plants, such as the convolvulus, closed their leaves as at night. At Venice the darkness was so great that the smoke from the steamboat funnels could not be seen. In several places birds in their flight came against the walls of houses. When the sky was clear several stars were seen, and in several places a reddish light was perceived near the horizon. A heavy dew fell at Perpignan. Mr Airy mentions an anecdote related to him by M. Arago of the captain of a French ship who had made most careful arrangements for taking observations in his vessel. When the darkness came on, however, all discipline was at an end; every one's attention was directed to the general phenomenon; and thus many minute observations were lost. For taking observations it may be mentioned that no particular astronomical skill is necessary, and few instruments—a telescope, stop-watch, common prism, and polariscope, include the more essential of them. A photogenic apparatus, either Daguerreotype or Talbotype, or both, by which a number of views could be obtained during the successive stages of the phenomenon, and at different localities, would be by far the most interesting and useful of the observations which travellers and men of science could contribute.

CONFESSIONS OF A PICTURE-DEALER'S HACK.

I AM going to make a clean breast of it, for the repose of my conscience, if I may be supposed to have any, and as some sort of laggard justice to that very numerous class towards whom a stern necessity has compelled me to play the impostor. I was once a student of nature, and enthusiastic in my studies—nourishing dreams of reputation and celebrity, with all the pleasant and agreeable accompaniments attendant upon them. Long years of painful experience have at length brought home to my consciousness the slow and unwillingly-acknowledged conviction, that I have wasted the thread of life in the pursuit of a vocation never intended for me; that, though once profoundly imbued

with the sentiment of art, I never really possessed the 'faculty divine,' without which success in the profession is hopeless. I say I *once* possessed the sentiment of art—because I don't pretend to it now; even that is gone, clean gone—frittered and fooled away by the conventional and technical din of the studio and the cant of connoisseurship. It is a wretched fact, that to me the whole world of art, so far as its aesthetic influence is concerned, is nothing but a blank, unless perhaps something worse. The once magic creations of Raphael, Corregio, Titian, and Rembrandt, are resolved, through the detestable process my mind has undergone, into mere masses of oil and varnish, canvas and colour. Where others behold with awe the expression of a god-like idea, the embodiments of intellect and passion, or the incarnations of physical or mental loveliness, I see nothing but paint—reds, browns, and yellows, madders and ultramarines, with the scumblings, and draggings, and glazings, and scrapings, and punice-stonings, and the thousand artifices employed in getting up an effect. It were well if this were all. I could be well content never to look on picture more, if the face of nature would return to me again under the aspect it wore in the days of my boyhood. But, alas! it cannot be. To me the

'Meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,'

are but suggestive of paint in its myriad mixtures and combinations. The gleam of sunshine upon a field is but a dash of Naples yellow; the dark gloom of evening closing o'er the distant mountains, speaking of infinite space and distance to the unsophisticated eye, is nothing to me but a graduated tint of indigo, red and white: the impenetrable depth of a yawning cavern, dimly discernible amid the sombre shades of a mountain gorge, though it may tell a tale of romance and mystery to others, is nothing upon earth to me but a dab of Vandyke brown. Nay, the boundless sky, the over-arching canopy that wraps us up in brightness or in gloom, is in my view, according to circumstances, but a tube of diluted cobalt, or a varied combination of grays and reds, and yellows and whites; while the glorious sun himself figures in my imagination, precisely as he does in the pictures of Claude Lorraine, as a one-shilling impression of a flame-coloured tint.

How this came about perhaps my history will shew. I shall make it as brief as I honestly can: may it prove a warning to the youthful aspirant for artistic fame, and incite him to a candid and timely investigation into the reality and extent of his creative faculty! One thing I know—it will prove a revelation of some value to collectors and connoisseurs of all ages and grades, provided only that they have yet modesty enough remaining to doubt the infallibility of their judgment.

I was born in one of the suburbs of the metropolis, and my earliest recollections are associated with the palette and the studio. My father, whose sole child I was, was an artist of very considerable talent, who, with a real love of nature, combined a ready hand and a facility of practice which enabled him to produce a multitude of pictures though he died young. My mother, who worshipped him with a devotion that knew no bounds, relieved him of every care unconnected with his pursuit. It was her business to dispose of his productions, which, being all of small size, rarely exceeding twenty inches in length, she carried to town, and sold to the dealers for as much as they would bring. In these perambulations, when I was big enough to take the long walks, I sometimes accompanied her, and when the sale was successful, generally got a cake or a toy for my share. Besides my mother, my only playmate was a small lay-figure, which it was the quiet delight of my childhood to cherish and fondle with an affection which I cannot now comprehend. My father's pictures never realised much during his life. They

were chiefly landscapes of a very simple style of composition, and scores of them had no other figures than a woman and a child, of which my mother and I were the models; and I remember distinctly that when a pair of them realised five pounds, it was the occasion of a rejoicing and a hot supper, which I was allowed to sit up and partake of. My poor father died before I was eleven years of age; and then his performances rose into sudden repute, selling rapidly for ten times the sum he had ever received for them. By degrees they all disappeared from public view, being bought up by the best judges, who during his life never condescended to notice the artist. My mother followed my father to the grave before her year of mourning had expired; and I, for the time heartbroken, was transferred to the care of my father's only brother, also an artist, though of a very different stamp. He sent me for two years to school, where, in the society of children of my own age, I soon forgot my griefs. Before I was fourteen my uncle bound me apprentice to himself, to make sure, as he said, of some sort of recompense for the trouble he would have in teaching me. He was a portrait-painter, at least so said the brass-plate on the door of the house in Charlotte Street; but very few and far between were the sitters who came to be limned. His principal occupation was that of cleaning and restoring old and damaged pictures, and in this he was employed mainly by the dealers, who allowed him but a sorry remuneration. He had, too, a small connection of his own, to whom he occasionally sold pictures, bought at the sales in a woful condition for a few shillings, and carefully got up by himself. With him I worked hard from morning to sunset for seven years, in the course of which period I copied an immense number of pieces, nearly all the copies being sold to country dealers, who came periodically to town and cleared them off. I learned thoroughly the difficult art and mystery of picture-cleaning; acquired of necessity some skill in portraiture; and prosecuted, whenever opportunity offered, the pursuit of landscape, in which I was resolutely determined upon gaining a reputation.

With this view, when the term of my indentures had run out, I bade adieu to my uncle, who made no attempt to alter my purpose, and commenced the world on my own account, devoting my whole time and energies to my favourite pursuit. I first painted a couple of pieces of a small size, and sent them to the — Street Exhibition, paying the then customary fee, which a wiser policy has since abolished. I felt overjoyed to hear that my pictures were hung, and hastened to look at them as soon as the doors were opened to the public. My hopes were dashed away by the sight of my two little productions, hardly covering more than a square foot of canvas each, suspended as telescopic objects high aloft beneath the gloom of the ceiling; while whole fathoms of the 'sight line' were choked up with the 'unmitigated abominations,' as the reviewers justly styled them, of one of the members of the committee, whom nature had cut out for a scavenger. I had gone in debt for my frames, which were returned to me at the close of the exhibition smashed to fragments. I could never afterwards afford to repeat the experiment.

I now began to paint for the dealers, thinking, as I had but myself to maintain, that I might get on with frugality, and in time tread in the steps of my father. The dealers shook their heads at my performances; and one, with more candour than the rest, produced one of my father's pieces, bought of my mother for thirty shillings, which he pronounced 'a little gem'—shewed me how crisp was the touch, how pure and sparkling the colour; how vigorous, and yet how playful, was the handling; and how simple and graceful was the composition. I endeavoured to profit by the lesson; but necessity drove me to the market with my

work unfinished, and for three years I maintained a hapless struggle with privations of all sorts, buoyed up only by the fervid ambition of excellence in my art. When the dealers would not buy my productions, I often left them in their hands to be sold on commission. When they did sell, I rarely discovered what they sold for; but from information accidentally obtained with regard to some few, I found that the average commission was about seventy-five per cent., leaving the other twenty-five for the artist.

I grew tired of starving in pursuit of improvement, and in the hopes of mending my fortune started a portrait club. The members were the frequenters of a Free-and-easy, who subscribed a shilling a week each, and drew lots for precedence; but they believed in beer, and had no faith in honesty. As each one received his portrait, he discontinued his subscription towards the rest, and I received next to nothing for painting the last half-dozen. The landlord, too, wished me at Jericho, as his customers took to bemusing themselves elsewhere, to avoid my eloquent appeals for the arrears. I bade a final adieu to their ugly faces, with a feeling of profound contempt as well for the department of art they encouraged as for the patrons of it, and returned to my garret, to cogitate some new mode of renewing my exhausted funds. I made a couple of sketches which occupied me a week, and took them to a pawnbroker, who lent me fifteen shillings upon them. I thought, as I threw the duplicates into the Thames, that though this would hardly do—taking the cost of canvas and colours into account—I might manage it by a little contrivance; so I procured half-a-dozen canvases of the same size, traced one subject—comprising a windmill, an old boat, and a white horse—upon them all, and making one palette do for all, got up the whole six in ten days. These I pawned for an average of eight shillings a piece. It was long since my pockets had been tightened with such a weight of silver; but with the new feeling of independence arose one of shame and degradation, which, however, I soon stifled. I repeated the same subject again and again; and grew so expert at length with my one picture, that a few hours sufficed to finish it. I kept a register of my numerous 'uncles,' taking care never to appear twice at the same place with the same picture. But this trick could not last. At the annual sale of unredeemed pledges the walls of the auction-room were covered with a whole regiment of repetitions amidst the jeers and hootings of the assembled bidders. My plan was blown, and I dared not shew my face to a pawnbroker. It was vain to send pictures to be pledged by another hand, the fellows knew my touch too well to be deceived. I tried again with original sketches, but it was of no use: everybody believed that I had a score of reduplications in store; and I was forced at length to abandon the pawnbrokers to their discrimination. I returned again to the dealers, but each and all had a copy of my windmill, old boat, and white horse hanging upon hand; and, pronouncing my productions unsaleable, declined to purchase. In this dilemma I was driven to the 'slaughter-houses,' or nightly auctions which are opened weekly at the West End, and constitute the last wretched refuge and resource of destitute daubers. Here I figured for some time, wasting my days in unprofitable attempts to meet the demands of a miserable market. I grew shabby and dispirited, and sank into the depths of poverty. Often I could not meet the expense of canvas, and painted on paper or millboard, or even on an old shirt stretched upon a worm-eaten strainer, begged or bought for a few halfpence from the liners' journeymen. Sometimes, aroused to exertion by a rekindling love of art, I would walk up to Hampstead or out to Norwood, and bringing back a subject, paint it up with all my old enthusiasm; but it availed me nothing: the picture was generally sacrificed for a few shillings; and even though it were

afterwards sold for a fair price, the profit had been shared in the knock-out, and I was none the better.

In this exigency I gladly complied with an offer made me by Mr Grabb, a carver and gilder with whom it had been my wont at times to exchange pictures for frames. In addition to his regular business he dealt in pictures to a great extent, had a large country connection, and, living himself in Soho, kept an extra shop in the city, where he always made an extraordinary show of colour and gilding on dividend days, with the especial design of catching the 'country gabies,' as he called them, cash in hand. With him I boarded and lodged, and received a small weekly salary, in return for which I was to occupy myself ten hours a day in making new pictures or restoring old ones, according to the demand. He had picked me up just in time for his purpose. A day or two after I entered upon my duties, he encountered a country baronet at a sale which had lasted for nearly a week. The man of title had bought between 200 and 300 lots, with the view of decorating a mansion which he was then building in Sussex; and having no place at hand to contain his numerous purchases, had accepted the ready offer of my patron to warehouse them for him for a season. The purchases arrived on the day of clearance, and with them the delighted owner, who had bought a whole gallery-full for about L.500. They were all stacked in the silvering-room, and my employer was commissioned to select such of the number as he judged would do credit to the taste of the possessor, to restore them to a good condition, to regild the frames of such as required it, and to dispose of the rejected pieces for what they would fetch, carrying the proceeds as a set-off against his bill. Mr Grabb knew perfectly well what to do with such a commission. The next day I was summoned to a consultation, and having locked the doors, the whole batch was gone over, and carefully scrutinised with the aid of a bowl of water and a sponge. All the large pictures (some were as big as the side of a room), many of which I felt bound to condemn as worthless, were set aside for repair and framing; while a select collection, amounting to about thirty of the smallest, best, and most saleable cabinet sizes, were thrown into a corner as unworthy of attention. For these, which were nearly worth all the rest of the collection put together, he ultimately made an allowance of L.15 off his bill, amounting to several hundreds, the cost of gorgeous frames and gilding for trumpery of no value. It took me four months to prepare such of the pictures as wanted cleaning for their gilded jackets, and it would have taken as many years had proper care and leisure been allowed for the operation; but I was admonished to follow a very summary process—to get off the dirt and old varnish from the lights, and to leave the shadows to shift for themselves, trusting to a good coat of varnish to blend the whole. One immense sea-fight, which defied all our solvents to disturb its crust, Grabb undertook himself. Stripping it from the stretcher, he laid it flat on the silvering-slab, and splashing water on its surface, seized a mass of pumicestone twice as big as his fist, and scrubbed away with bare arms, like a housemaid at a kitchen-floor, until admonished by the tinge of the water that he had done enough. The canvas was then restrained, and turned over to me to paint again what he had scoured away. As the whole rigging of a seventy-four was clean gone, I began the slow process of renewing it; but he would not hear of that, but bade me bury everything in a cloud of smoke as the shorter way of getting over the business. When the whole were ultimately carted home and hung up in his new residence, the baronet was delighted with his gallery, and with this picture in particular, which certainly differed more than any of the others from its original appearance.

The baronet's commission being now settled and

done with, the rejected pictures were withdrawn from their hiding-place and confided with many precautions to my most careful treatment. I laboured *con amore* in their restoration, and Grabb reaped a little fortune by their disposal. He kept me well employed. Every picture which came in to be framed or repaired, if he judged the subject saleable, was transferred to me for copying, and sorry indeed should I be to swear that the original invariably found its way back to the owner.

Soon after my domiciliation at Grabb's my uncle left Charlotte Street, and with a large cargo of English pictures emigrated to New York, where he sold his venture to good advantage. In one of the southern cities he found patronage and a wife, and grew into consideration ere he died.

I remained seven years with Grabb, and during that period attained a wonderful facility in the production of copies, and so close an acquaintance with the method and handling of some of the living London artists, as occasionally perplexed even themselves. This talent my employer turned to good account by selling forgeries of mine as the original sketches of painters of note and reputation; and at the decease of any one of them he supplied me with canvas and panels procured from the colourmen they had dealt with, and set me about the manufacture of sketches and unfinished pictures, which were readily bought up as the relics of celebrated geniuses.

At the close of my seventh year business fell short. True there was plenty for me to do, but owing to distress in the manufacturing districts, the sale of pictures, as is invariably the case at such seasons, very much declined. Still my principal managed to get rid of his stock, though not in the regular way of business: he packed off a portion of his best goods to country agents, and to old customers on approval, and crammed the shop in the city to overflowing, where also he took to sleeping at night, leaving me and the shop-boy sole guardians of the house in Soho. One morning about two o'clock, while soundly sleeping in my garret, I was aroused from my rest by a thundering noise at my room door, and the affrighted cries of the boy, calling upon me to arise and save myself, for the house was on fire. I dashed out of bed, contrived to huddle on a portion of my clothes, and opened the door. The room was instantly filled with smoke; the boy had already escaped through the trap-door in the roof, which, being left open, acted as a flue to the fire, the flames of which were rapidly ascending the stairs. I had no time for reflection, nor sufficient presence of mind to snatch, as I might have done, the few pounds I had hoarded from my drawer; but scrambling after him as I best might, found myself in a few minutes shivering on the roof of a neighbour's house, in my shirt and trousers, now my sole worldly possessions. A servant-girl let us in at a garret window, and I immediately despatched the boy for his master, whom, however, I did not see till the morning, when he coolly informed me that he was a ruined man, and that I must look out for some other employer. He paid me a small arrear of wages due, and gave me a faded suit of his own to begin the world afresh. I may add that Grabb subsequently received two thousand pounds insurance money; that in two years after he was so unfortunate as to be burned out again, and received fifteen hundred; that he was overtaken by the same calamity twice afterwards in New York; and returning again to London, was again burned out; whereupon the office in which he had insured politely informed him that he might recover the money if he could in a court of justice—they should not else pay it. He never instituted any proceedings, but carried on business for ten years without insurance and without accident.

I could not afford to remain long idle; and being now pretty well known to a certain portion of the trade, I was not long of obtaining employment. My

next engagement was with Sapper, who kept a shop for the sale of pictures, together with large warehouses, in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden. I thought myself pretty well versed in the art and mystery of picture-making, and conceived that after my long experience under Grabb I had little if anything left to learn. This worthy undeceived me effectually. In my former place I had been the only hand; here I found three companions, each far more experienced and more clever than myself. One, a gentleman-like old fellow, painted nothing but Morlands from one year's end to the other. He had been a contemporary of that eccentric genius, and had mastered his style so effectually that he would have deceived even me had I met with his forgeries elsewhere. He was provided with a complete portfolio of every piece of Morland's which had ever been engraved, besides a considerable number of his original chalk drawings; he had, moreover, pentographed outlines of the known size of the original paintings, which outlines were transferred to the canvas in a few minutes by means of tracing-paper, and painted in from the prints, which were all slightly tinted after the originals for his guidance. A man of about five-and-forty, a Manchester artist, of thorough training and admirable skill in his department, did duty every morning from eight till twelve o'clock as the celebrated Greuze; after that hour he disappeared, to attend to his own practice as a portrait-painter. I recognised at once in his work the source of the numerous admirable transcripts of that master which I had been for years in the habit of occasionally encountering both in sale-rooms and private collections. The third was a Dutchman, whom Sapper had picked up on a picture-tour in Holland, and engaged from admiration of his marvellous imitations of Teniers, whose works, with others of a similar school, he was constantly employed in imitating with astonishing fidelity and success.

Among these companions I was directed to set up my easel and commence operations; and a small picture of Patrick Nasmyth was put into my hand to be copied in duplicate. I was directed to mix a certain substance with every tint that was laid on with any thickness, to insure its drying speedily 'as hard as a brick,' lest the finger-nail of a wide-awake customer should detect the softness of new colour. The panels put into my hands, though snow-white with the prepared ground on the one side, were black with age on the other, and spotted over here and there with the cracked sealing-wax impressions of well-known connoisseurs, to intimate that the picture I was about to commence had already passed through the hands of several collectors of repute. When I had finished them, both being done within a week, they were, after a few days' drying, slightly glazed with a weak solution of liquorice to give them tone: one was varnished, framed, and readily sold from the window; the other laid by in a garret, to await, with a hundred more, its turn for exportation. My next job was a magnificent Cuyp, which had not many weeks before been knocked down by auction for eight hundred guineas, and which was confided to Sapper for the purpose of removing the old varnish and substituting new, and for framing. As nothing else was required to be done, the picture might have been returned to the proprietor within a week or ten days; but Sapper determined from the moment he saw it to possess a facsimile, and I was set about the manufacture of one forthwith. A panel was prepared of the precise age, from three oak planks selected from the stores of a dealer in old houses, and dyed to the required tint by a strong infusion of tobacco. By means of new bread kneaded in the hand the two broad burgomaster's seals on the back were counterfeited beyond the possibility of detection, and I commenced upon the surface with all the industry and skill I was master of, stimulated to the task by the prospect of an extra guinea. The picture had been promised to the owner in a week,

my employer knowing well enough that it would take me four or five weeks at least to make the copy. It was in vain that one message after another came to urge the return of the picture, and that the owner himself drove up in his carriage, and remonstrated in no measured terms with Sapper, and threatened him with the interference of the law. The knave had a reply ever ready upon his lips: 'He was determined to do justice to so exquisite a work of art, and he would not, he could not, be induced to hurry it; his reputation would suffer should any mischief happen to the painting; which he would prevent, in this case at least, even at the risk of disobliging his patron.' At length, after nearly six weeks' delay, I had completed the copy; and then Sapper himself, in less than an hour, licked off all the old varnish with a wisp of wadding steeped in 'the doctor,' gave it a new coat of mastic, clapped it into an elegant and appropriate frame, and despatched a note to the proprietor requesting his attendance and approval. He came, and was delighted with the aspect of his picture; while the dealer, with a thousand modest apologies for the delay, assured him that the task had been one of great labour and anxiety both to him and me, and that he could not, consistently with justice to the master, have accomplished it sooner. The wealthy connoisseur swallowed his lies with evident relish and satisfaction, reiterated his thanks again and again for the marvellous manner in which the picture had been got up, and paid at the same time a bouncing bill for a process which a crown would have amply recompensed. There remained now nothing to be done to the copy in order to render it a tolerable facsimile of the original, but to imitate the close reticulation of cracks—the ineffaceable work of time—which covered every square inch of the surface. This was accomplished in the following manner:—After the copy had stood to dry for a fortnight, by which time, thanks to certain nostrums ground up with the colours, the whole had grown as hard as a pantile, it was taken down, slightly toned with a warm brown to give it age, and when again dry, carefully coated with size; the composition of which, as it is already too well known among the knaves of the profession, and can be of no manner of utility to any honest man, I may be excused from explaining. This was no sooner tolerably dry, than it was followed by a liberal coating of varnish floated over the surface, and left to harden in a room free from dust. The inevitable result from such a process is, that the varnish is no sooner set than it begins to crack, owing to the expansion of the understratum of size; and this cracking may be regulated by an experienced hand, in varying the proportions of the ingredients used in compounding the size, and in other ways, so as to give rise to fissures of all widths, from the thickness of a hair, as exhibited on the panels of the Dutchmen, to that of a crown-piece, as they are beheld in the present condition of most of the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds. With the width of the cracks the size of the reticulations also varies; ranging from the diameter of a small shot to that of the palm of the hand. When very fine, the cracks are not visible until made so by rubbing impurities into them, for which purpose the dust which settles upon a polished table, wiped up with an old silk handkerchief slightly oiled, is usually preferred. The difference between a picture thus cracked by artifice and one cracked by the operation of years or centuries cannot, other things being equal, be possibly discerned by the closest inspection. The only way to get at the imposture would be to remove the varnish, either by friction or solvents, when the fissures would be found in the true picture to extend through the paint, while from the manufactured copy they would disappear with the varnish—a rule, however, which would not be without exceptions.

One morning our old Morland found himself standing still, not from any want of subjects or demand for

them, but because the young fellow, whose business it was to line canvases and prepare panels for us all to work upon, had been out on one of his periodical drunken bouts, and had nothing ready for him. Sapper, coming up and seeing him idle, requested him to go to a broker's in Red Lion Street and 'crab' a picture for him, as he wanted to buy it. When the old fellow had gone off on his errand, I asked the Greuze what he was gone after. 'Oh,' said he, 'the broker wants L.10 for a bit of Gainsborough, and the governor wants it for fifty shillings—that's all.' I soon found that 'crabbing' is the art of putting a man wanting judgment in the article he deals in out of conceit with his goods. Two or three *accidental* inquiries, with demonstrations of amazement at the 'enormous' price asked, are found materially to lower the demands of the seller. In this instance Sapper eventually succeeded in getting the picture he wanted at his own price; and after disposing of several copies in various quarters, ultimately sold it again for its full value.

He sold pictures on commission; and these he managed, when it was worth his while, with a complex kind of adroitness which is worth recording. I shall chronicle one instance: a gentleman who had given L.800 for a famous production of one of our first living artists, grew discontented with its too great size, and sent it to Sapper to be disposed of, professing himself willing to lose L.100 by the sale, but not more. Sapper offered it for L.1000, and at length obtained a bidding of L.700, which, as he observed, would have left nothing for himself. He immediately wrote to the owner, informing him that he had an offer of L.200 and a fine Claude, which he requested him to come and inspect, as he did not like to refuse the offer without the owner's sanction. Meanwhile one of Hoffland's beautiful transcripts of Claude, procured in exchange at the nominal price of sixty guineas, was mounted on the easel, and, covered with a curtain, awaited the inspection of the victim. He came, and, deceived by the really fine execution of the picture—the counterfeited cracks of age, the palpably Italian style of lining, in which Sapper was skilled to a miracle, and the Roman frame and gilding—concluded the transaction, giving the rogue a small commission for his trouble, who, in addition to that, pocketed the difference between L.500 and the value of the pretended Claude, which would have been well sold at L.50.

Though Sapper's house was filled with works of art of every imaginable description, overflowing with pictures from the cellar to the garret, including every species of rubbish gathered from the holes and corners of half Europe, yet the contents of his dwelling afforded but an inadequate idea of the extent of his stock. He had 'plants' in the hands of numerous petty agents, the owners of small shops in suburban highways, who sold for a trifling per-centage. He had here a Madonna and there a Holy Family in the keeping of a lone widow or a decayed spinster, whispered about as pieces of great value, which the holders were compelled to part with from the pressure of domestic misfortune or embarrassment; he had traps and baits lying in wait for the inevitable though long-deferred rencontre of customers whom bitter experience had rendered wary, and who had long ceased buying in the regular market; and he had collections snugly warehoused in half the large towns of the empire, waiting but the wished-for crisis of commercial prosperity to be catalogued and sold as the unique collection of some lately defunct connoisseur, removed to — for convenience of sale.

Among the acres of what he called his gallery pictures was one with an area of some hundred square feet, upon which he had bestowed the names of Rubens and Snyders. It had hung for years upon hand, and was at length disposed of by the following ingenious ruse:—A gentleman who had appeared at different

times desirous of treating for it—now negotiating an exchange, now chaffering for a cash price—hovering on the edge of a resolution, like Prior's malefactor on the gallows cart—at length absented himself, and withdrawing on a visit to B—, appeared to have relinquished the idea of dealing. Sapper, knowing that a picture-sale was shortly coming off in the town to which his dallying customer had flown, and knowing, too, that he could do as he chose with the auctioneer, who was an old chum, followed close upon the heels of the tardy bidder, taking the enormous picture with him. As the cunning rogue had calculated, the instincts of the would-be-buyer led him to the sale-room, where his astonishment was unbounded at beholding the picture he had so long coveted at length condemned to the hammer. On the following day, when the sale came on, Sapper, who had not shewn his face in the town, lay enconcealed in a snug box behind the fence over which the lots were consecutively hoisted, and here, concealed from view, he ran up the picture against the eager bidder to the full sum he had offered for it in London, and bought it in against him in the name of an Irish nobleman. So soon as the doors were shut, the picture was again off to London, and the next day appeared in its usual place on the wall of the staircase. In a fortnight after the gentleman walks into the shop, exclaiming: 'Ha, Sapper, so you have parted with the picture—you might as well have closed with my offer.' 'I don't understand you,' said the other—'I have parted with no picture that I know of which you had any inclination for.'

'I mean the Rubens and Snyders,' replied the gentleman; 'it was sold at B— about a fortnight ago, and fetched about what I offered for it. I must know, for I was there myself, and bid for it.'

'I don't pretend to contradict you, sir,' retorted Sapper; 'all I know is, that the picture you speak of has never been out of my house, and, what is more, is not likely to go, unless I get my price for it. Now I think of it, there was a young fellow from B— up here last summer, who gave me ten pounds for permission to copy it; and a capital copy he made: had I known he was so good a hand I should not have let him do it for the money. You will find the picture in its place if you like to step and look at it.'

Up walks the bewildered gentleman, and can scarcely believe his eyes at beholding the old favourite in its old place. Sapper follows with a sponge and water, and cleaning down the face of the painting, expresses his astonishment that any one should mistake a copy, however cleverly done, for such a fine work as that; adding, that if the copy brought so good a sum under the hammer, what must be the actual value of the original? The inference was inevitable, and the speedy result was the consummation of the purchase, not without some show of unwillingness on the part of Sapper, who appeared impressed with the notion that he was submitting to a tremendous sacrifice.

I cannot, nor need I, continue these details. I have said enough to warn the unwary, and to arouse the watchfulness of the wise. Is it wonderful that the moral atmosphere in which I have lived, and moved, and had my being, should have had the effect upon my mind which I have described at the commencement of this paper? When connoisseurs and critics stand gasping with breathless raptures in contemplation of slimy mixtures of megilp and burned bones; when they solemnly invoke the shades of the mighty dead, and ejaculate their mandlin rhapsodies in reverential whispers, as though hushed to silence by the spirit of departed genius in the presence of a rascally forgery perpetrated for a wage of thirty shillings—what marvel if one whom hunger and necessity have driven to deceit should lose all capacity for the proper appreciation of art or nature either, and should at last be able to look at both only through the prostituted means and materials which

during a whole lifetime have been the daily instruments of deceit?

What I would inculcate is not far to seek: he who buys a picture should never speculate beyond his judgment; and if he would encourage living art, should do so in the studio of the artist.

THINGS TALKED OF IN LONDON.

July 1851.

THE Census has been a prominent subject of talk from the time that the Registrar-General made the facts public. They have been examined, commented on, and discussed in various ways by the Statistical Society and others; and many and important are the consequent deductions. Looking at the rapid increase and spread of the Anglo-Saxon race on both sides of the Atlantic and in the southern hemisphere, we are told that this race and the English language are to become predominant among the nations and tongues of the earth. Notwithstanding the going forth of emigrants by hundreds of thousands from our shores during the past ten years, the population of Britain has increased 2,263,550 since 1841. In London at the last census the numbers were 1,948,369: now they amount to 2,363,141; and who shall assign a limit to the further multiplication? While it lasts, the great metropolis becomes year by year a more remarkable and interesting phenomenon—a mightier subject of study for the reflective mind. One fact as to the country at large has already given rise to a little serious inquiry: the returns shew that there are half a million more females than males; and social philosophers are beginning to wonder what is to become of them.

The Census, however, as well as most other topics, is thrown into the shade by the Exhibition, which still continues to be the subject of gossip. The objects on show, the throngs of visitors, the daily-enlarging experiences as to the practicability and philosophy of great gatherings, form infinite themes of discussion and remark. According to some, certain beneficial moral effects are beginning to be apparent. Meantime our learned societies have pursued the even tenor of their way without any more striking change than that of an occasional sprinkling of moustached foreigners at their meetings. The Royal Society have held their election meeting, and admitted fifteen out of nearly forty candidates to the honour of fellowship, and they, in common with other distinguished confraternities, have brought their session to a close. Their president, Lord Rosse, has given the last of his four *soirées*; and weary officials are full of self-gratulation at the prospect of a breathing time. And truly there are many who need it; for the whirl and excitement of parties, conversations, &c. are so continuous and overwhelming, that it is only by going to two or three in the course of an evening that some people manage to render the courtesies expected of them, and to conciliate their friends and acquaintances. What should we do were it not for the beauty and quiet of the country?

Happily the turmoil is not universal, as you may judge by the steady way in which scientific research and philosophical investigation are maintained. For example: Let ocean steam-navigators take courage, for it is now an ascertained fact that, in addition to the deposits in several islands of the Indian Archipelago, coal exists in abundance in the Korean peninsula of China. Surprise has at times been expressed that coal should be found in the torrid zone: if a final cause of a very special nature were necessary in the case, it might be found in the maintenance and multiplication of steamers on the great oceans. Another fact from the East is one to which, as the readers of 'Cosmos' will remember, Humboldt attaches some importance—the line of perpetual snow on the Himalayas. It appears from recent explorations by Lieutenant Strachey, that

on the southern edge this line is at an elevation of 15,000 feet, and at 18,500 on the northern; while on the mountains to the north of the Sutlej it rises to 19,000 feet. Thus an inquiry of some interest in physical geography may be considered as settled, subject of course to revision by future explorers.

Lieutenant Gilliss, who, as I told you some time ago, is at the head of an astronomical expedition sent out by the United States to South America, has written an account of the late earthquake at Valparaiso. He says that, 'for several days before and after, there were extraordinary fluctuations of the barometer, and overcast weather. Finding the instrument made for measuring the intensity of shocks fail in its indications, he constructed a pendulum more than nine feet long, supported on a triangle, with a needle inserted in the lower part of the bob, which,' to quote his description, 'just touches a sheet of glazed paper marked with concentric circles and the points of the compass. The paper lies on a horizontal plate of glass resting on the earth, and is sprinkled with black sand, so that the motion of the pendulum leaves a white line exposed. It is to be regretted that the paper had not been secured to the earth, for during the shock there was a displacement bodily of about half an inch; but we have a distinct ellipse, whose diameters are 3.5 inches and 2.4 inches, and positive evidence that the motion of the disturbing force was in a line varying little from north by east to south by west, or contrary to the supposed direction in which the earth-wave has moved in all preceding great disturbances.' These facts are the more interesting at the present time, as the subject of an earthquake-ometer has been more than once discussed at the late meetings of the British Association.

To pass from South to North America, there is the usual assortment of 'notions' from the United States, among which not the least curious is the fact that not fewer than twenty-one applications for patents for churns were made in the course of last year. Most of these utensils were what is called 'atmospheric churns,' which means that they were contrived so that in the process of churning air was interfused with the cream, by which a more complete agitation was effected, and the butter more quickly produced than by the ordinary way. A common churn, it is said, may be converted into an atmospheric, by piercing a hole from one extremity of the dasher to the other, and placing a valve at the bottom to open downwards only. If the dasher be raised quickly, air and not cream rushes into the opening, and on the descent is pressed out laterally, and escapes through the whole mass of the cream, which appears as though it were boiling violently. On some occasions, when the question as to performance and principle between any two churns became delicate, the inventors were required to make butter in the Patent Office at Washington; and once there was held a 'churn race' between a patented and a new churn, in which they both came out alike, making butter from new milk in two-and-a-half minutes.' But as the commissioner appointed to decide on the merits of the case, reports: 'Such a rapid separation of the butter is by no means desirable, although this is the general aim of these improvements. We have it upon the highest chemical authority, that butter made so rapidly is not likely to be as good as that which is made slowly.' Thus it would appear that there is a limit to the time of butter-making, not to be overpassed without prejudice to the article—a fact worthy of consideration by those who hold quick production to be the best.

In certain quarters, chiefly among those who are food-providers, M. Masson's experiments are exciting attention. He is gardener-in-chief to the Horticultural Society of France, and has announced a method for preserving alimentary vegetable substances, the result of ten years' study, in which the bulk of the

vegetable is reduced without altering its constitution. The process is one of desiccation in stoves at a low temperature, followed by powerful compression in a hydraulic press. The first operation, as the author describes, deprives the substances of their superabundant moisture, which, in cabbages and certain roots, amounts to 80 or 85 per cent. of the whole bulk. By the second their volume is much reduced, and the density increased until it resembles that of pine-wood, thereby facilitating preservation, packing, and transport.

When required for use, the substance has only to be soaked in tepid water for thirty or forty minutes, and cooked and seasoned in the usual way. Vegetables so preserved have been tried in the French navy; a case of cabbage taken on board the corvette *Astrolabe* in January 1847 was opened in January 1851, and on being dressed was found to be 'of excellent flavour.' All the cakes were in good condition; some of them absorbed six and a half times their weight of water.

M. Masson states that his process admits of application to all green vegetables, as well as to roots, tubers, and fruits. If emigration is to go on as of late, compressed vegetables would supply a most essential aliment to thousands who have now to undergo severe privations and the risk of disease whether on land or water. With these, and the 'meat biscuit' recently introduced from America, and the bread made at Toulouse by certain ingenious bakers from the gluten hitherto wasted in starch factories, one might bid defiance to famine.

Messrs Gratiolet and Cloez have submitted to the Académie a 'Note on the venomous properties of the lactescent humour secreted in the cutaneous pustules of the terrestrial salamander and common toad,' in which it is shewn that the popular belief regarding the nature of the animals in question is not without foundation. They first observed that several frogs which had been shut up with salamanders (efts) in a barrel, were found dead at the end of a week; and having collected a pure white liquid from the pustules of the salamanders, a small quantity was inserted under the leg or wing of a bird. No immediate inconvenience was perceived, but after a few minutes the creatures operated on were seen to stagger, to open and shut the beak convulsively, to erect their feathers, utter plaintive cries, and die in extreme agony. A yellow-hammer thus treated died in three minutes, a turtle-dove in twenty minutes, a chaffinch in twenty-five; most of the birds, however, died in six or seven minutes. Strangely enough, the poison does not appear to be fatal to quadrupeds: even mice escape; but all undergo great suffering.

The poison of the toad (*Rana bufo*) is yellowish, and insupportably bitter in taste. It killed greenfinches and chaffinches in from five to six minutes after inoculation; thus shewing the two poisons to be equally energetic in their action on birds, with this difference, that convulsions are produced by that of the salamander but not by that of the toad. The two authors are pursuing the inquiry into this interesting subject; when they publish anything further worth recording, I shall not fail to acquaint you with it.

Three other savans have been making 'Experimental researches on the modifications produced in the animal temperature by the introduction of different therapeutic agents into the animal economy.' Sulphate of copper, according to their testimony, has a constant lowering effect, which remains for ten or twelve hours. Tartar-emetic, whether in the stomach or the blood, elevates the temperature when taken in minute doses, while larger doses depress. With ipecacuanha the effect is precisely reversed: it is the largest dose which most raises the temperature. Two drops of croton oil first lower, then elevate. Twelve drops produce a reduction of five degrees of temperature in the course of two hours. These are but a few

selected from numerous experiments which are still carried on, as having an important bearing on medical practice—sufficient, however, to give you an idea of their nature. I must just add, before quitting this part of the subject, that M. Carnot states that vaccination only serves to *displace*, not to *diminish* mortality. He believes that the practice of inoculation, and the varioloid eruption consequent thereupon, prevented those gastro-intestinal diseases which are now so frequent and fatal to persons from twenty to thirty years of age. Let the doctors look to it.

M. Babinet has been investigating mathematically the 'Relation of temperature to the development of plants.' It is a question that has been discussed over and over again, and is still debatable. The postulate is, that 'every plant starting from a certain temperature requires the same amount of heat for its equal development.' Thus the point to be first determined was this starting temperature, which of course varies with different plants, and then to estimate the amount of heat necessary to advance the plant from germination to florescence and fructification. It is known that 150 days at a temperature of 60 degrees will effect as much as 100 days at 70 degrees. M. Babinet shews, in a way only to be understood by mathematicians, that the point of departure may be determined by mathematical formulæ, and considers that a much greater increment of heat is necessary for the full development than has been thought of by others who have studied the same subject. While they decide that *two* or even *one* degree is sufficient, he holds that *six* are necessary. In these days of land reclamation and agricultural enterprise such a question becomes important. Its decision will indicate how far north a farmer may plant and sow with hope of success.

Apropos of cultivation, we are promised a plan, by a Frenchman, for destroying insects hurtful to grain; and M. Guérin-Méneville, whose name I have frequently introduced to your notice, has published certain practical observations on the silk-worm in health and disease, and the best means to improve the breed: he also proposes a method to prevent the boring-worm, by which olive-trees are infested, from pursuing its depredations. Further, and apropos of botany, Professor Blüme of Leyden has just presented to the Académie his valuable work, in several volumes, on the Dutch plants of the Eastern Archipelago. Among others he treats of the different kinds of upas—a tree of which we used to read with horror in our schoolboy days. They are all more or less poisonous in their juices; but, as M. Blüme shews, the stories about the noxious vapours destroying the birds that fly over them are mere inventions, for birds build their nests and rear their young as comfortably in the branches of the upas as in any other tree. He adds that the volcanic soil of Java in certain places emits a deleterious gas, the effects of which have been mistakenly attributed to the trees.

Photography is being pursued with such vigour as to shew that ere long it will compete powerfully with the arts of engraving and printing. M. Bayard is working at the problem, 'To render the positive paper highly impressionable under the action of a light relatively very feeble.' By his process he gets copies of the positive impression in one second by the sun, and in less than an hour by a carcel lamp. And according to M. Blanquart Evrard of Lille, copies of the negative impression may be taken at the rate of 200 or 300 per day, and sold for one penny or twopence. If he can really do what he says, how perfect and exact we may hope to have the illustrations of books!

To turn to another topic, M. Pierre Landry applies hygienic laws to the construction of towns and cities, and submits a plan to the Académie which is to satisfy all the needs of health, &c. Taking a town situate on

a public highway, he describes: '1. The main-road which commonly traverses the town is contrived so as to form the three principal streets which comprise the town within them; 2. The public edifices necessary to the whole town are grouped at the centre, and thus realise a spacious reservoir of air and sunshine; 3. The streets composing the town are planned around the public edifices, avoiding exposure to the north; 4. At the angles of the town are private country residences, and beyond them agricultural buildings; 5. At one end are the hospitals, barracks, museum of natural history,' &c.

By this plan, as the inventor sums up, 'every one has the sun, pure air, a picturesque prospect, and the maximum of hygienic conditions; and the causes of disease arising out of vicious construction may be made to disappear from towns.' It must be remembered that M. Landry writes for French readers. The question which he opens is one that has excited some attention in France; in proof of which I may mention the translation of Mr Roberts's work on the Dwellings of the Labouring-Classes under the auspices of the President.

I have much more to say, but can only make room for a remarkable fact: M. Charault finds, on electrifying a liquid in which an aerometer is placed, that the instrument immediately rises, indicating a lesser density of the fluid. On de-electrifying, it sinks to its former level. The same effect can neither be produced by the current from a galvanic battery nor by the discharge from a Leyden jar.

STORY OF A DRAMATIST.

ONE cold morning in February 1810, a short, stout, commonplace-looking man, about sixty years old, entered the garden of an inn situated in the suburbs of Paris. Although the air was sharp and frosty, he seated himself near one of the tables placed out of doors, and taking off his hat, passed his fingers through his long gray hairs.

His hands contrasted strangely with the remainder of his person: they were small, white, and terminated in such delicately-formed pink nails as might excite the envy of many a young lady. Presently one of the waiters came up, and placed before him a bottle of wine.

'Not any to-day, thank you,' said the old man. 'I feel fatigued, and will just rest for a moment.'

'The best way of resting, monsieur,' replied the waiter gaily, 'is to drink a good glass of wine.'

He drew the cork, and poured out some of the wine.

The old man rose and walked away. The waiter was a young lad, and it was with a confused and embarrassed air that he ran after the guest and said: 'Sir, there is credit for you at the Lion d'Or; if you have forgotten your purse, that's no reason you should lose your breakfast. To-morrow, or whenever you like, you can ask for the bill.'

The old man turned, looked at the youth, and a tear sparkled in his eye. 'Thou art right, Jean,' he said; 'poverty must not be proud. I accept thy kindness as frankly as it is offered. Help thyself to a glass of wine.'

'I drink to your very good health, monsieur,' said the waiter; and having emptied his glass, he went and fetched some spiced meat, bread, cheese, fruit, and everything necessary for a tempting and nourishing repast; then with native politeness, in order to lessen the painful sense of obligation to his guest, he said: 'When next one of your pieces is played, will you give me a ticket?'

'Thou shalt have two this very evening, my good

lad. I will go and get them from Brunet, and bring them back to thee.'

'The walk would be too much for your strength, monsieur: some other day, when you happen to pass by, will do as well.'

'Thou shalt have a ticket to-day, for they are going to perform one of my pieces, "*Le Désespoir de Jocrisse*," at the Théâtre des Variétés; and it may amuse thee.'

'Ah, thank you, monsieur! What laughing I shall have!'

'Yes; the poor old man, who but for thy charity would not have had a morsel to eat to-day, will this evening entertain a numerous assembly. They will applaud his pleasantry, they will laugh at his wit, but none of them will inquire about his destiny.'

'But, monsieur, do not your pieces bring you money?'

'Not now, my friend. In order to support life during the past month I was obliged to forestall the resources of the present one. These are only the slender returns from my former productions, for now age and misfortune have robbed my mind of its former powers. I no longer offer any vaudevilles to the managers; for although they accept them, and pay me, they never have them played. I perceive they only take them from motives of compassion, and as a pretext for giving me alms. Now, my friend, thou art the first from whom I have accepted charity, and thou shalt be the last. The son of Louis Quinze may have descended to write in the character of a buffoon, and as it were to set his wit dancing on the tight-rope of a vaudeville, but he will not become a beggar were he expiring of hunger. You look as if you thought I have lost my senses; but it is not so. Louis Dorvigny is the son of a king. My mother, the young orphan daughter of the Count d'Archambaud, died in giving me birth. My father was Louis Quinze. During my childhood and youth an invisible protector watched over me, and provided amply for my support and education. Suddenly the fostering hand was withdrawn, and I was cast on the world to work unaided for my support. I did so until the moment when the powers of both mind and body failed me. That is my history—a royal origin, success, reputation, almost glory; and its end—a meal owed to thy charity! Adieu, young man, and thanks; I will bring thee the ticket for the play.' So the old man departed, but as he stepped into the road he found himself intercepted by two or three cavalry regiments returning to their barracks after a review.

The band was playing a lively air, and in the midst of the troops rode in the place of honour a general dressed in a magnificent uniform, and mounted on a splendid Andalusian charger. Happening as he passed to cast a glance at Dorvigny, he uttered a loud exclamation of surprise. Without heeding his soldiers he stopped, jumped off his horse, and taking the old man by the hand, saluted him with great affection. Dorvigny stared with astonishment, not recognising his features.

'You do not know me! Have twenty years caused Monsieur Dorvigny to forget his idle, good-for-nothing servant-boy?'

'Jean Dubois!'

'Yes, Jean Dubois—Jocrisse, as you used to call him. You ought not to have forgotten me, for I served as the model of one of your happiest dramatic creations.'

'What! my poor boy—monsieur, I mean—thou art—you are become a general?'

'Precisely. While in your service I was a terrible destroyer of plates: now in the Emperor's, I perform the same office for his enemies. How glad I am to have met you! During the two days since my arrival in Paris I have sent to seek for you in every direction, but I could not discover your address.'

'Because I have no longer an address.'

'Then you must come and take up your abode at mine.'

'General!'

'A general is accustomed to be punctually obeyed. I arrest you as my prisoner. Go,' he continued, addressing a soldier, 'fetch me a carriage, and lead my horse home. Now, Monsieur Dorvigny, step in.'

Half-laughing, half-resisting, the old man took his place in the carriage next the general. 'Do you remember,' said the latter as they drove on, 'the day that I left your service, because, as you told me, you were no longer rich enough to keep a servant? I tried my fortune in several situations, but did not find any master so lenient towards my faults as you; so as a last resource I enlisted in a regiment. I was jeered by my comrades for my awkwardness, and for many months led an unhappy life; until one day we found ourselves at Bormio in the Valteline, facing a redoubt which opened a murderous fire on our ranks. The order was given to advance, and we rushed to the attack; but presently most of our men were mowed down, and those who escaped hesitated and drew back. I threw myself alone into the redoubt, shouting: "Follow me, boys!" They did so. The Austrians, astonished at this unlooked-for attack, fled, and we took twelve pieces of cannon. The same day I was made a sergeant; and afterwards, by degrees and the fortunes of war, rose to the rank I now occupy. Perhaps I may get still higher!'

Dorvigny was installed by the general in a pleasant apartment next his own, and for some time the old man enjoyed all the comforts and luxuries of life. At length his friend received an order to set out for Russia. During the first three months of the campaign General Dubois sent letters and remittances to his former master, but they suddenly ceased, and one morning, from the column of a newspaper, Dorvigny learned that his friend had fallen at Moscow.

He was forced to leave his pleasant lodging, and take refuge in an attic in an obscure part of Paris. There, after having sold the coat off his back, overwhelmed with age and illness, he went to the proprietor of the Théâtre des Variétés, whose fortune he had made, and begged for a small weekly pittance. It was refused. The old man smiled bitterly when the sentence was pronounced, and from that time he shunned meeting his acquaintance. The bookseller, Barba, who felt some friendship for him, sought him in various parts of the city, but in vain. A short time afterwards Barba happened to hear that in a mean lodging, in the Rue Grenétat, was lying, unclaimed and unknown, the corpse of an old man. With a sad presentiment he hastened thither. It was indeed Dorvigny—dead from cold and hunger, uncared for alike in life and death!

The son of a peasant, the awkward servant-boy, became a general, and after a glorious career died the death of a hero: the son of a king, the charming poet, the bewitching dramatist, lived in poverty, and died the death of an outcast! Such is life!*

SHAKESPEARE AND THE MOUNTBANK.

When I was a boy I went once to a theatre. The tragedy of Hamlet was performed—a play full of the noblest thoughts, the subtlest morality that exists upon the stage. The audience listened with attention, with admiration, with applause. But now an Italian mountebank appeared upon the stage—a man of extraordinary personal strength and sleight of hand. He performed a variety of juggling tricks, and distorted his body into a thousand surprising and unnatural postures. The audience were transported beyond themselves; if they had felt delight in Hamlet, they glowed with rapture at the mountebank. They had listened with attention to the

lofty thought, but they were snatched from themselves by the marvel of the strange posture. Enough, said I; where is the glory of ruling men's minds and commanding their admiration when a greater enthusiasm is excited by mere bodily agility than was kindled by the most wonderful emanations of a genius little less than divine?—*Eugene Aram.*

THREE SONNETS.

'Till with the dawn those angel faces smile,
That I have lov'd long since, and lost awhile.'

I WILL not paint them. God them sees, and I:
None other can, nor need. They have no form;
I cannot close with passionate kisses warm
Their eyes that shine from far or from on high,
But never will shine nearer till I die.
How long, how long! See, I am growing old,
Have ceas'd to count within my hair's close fold
The silver threads that there in ambush lie;
Some angel faces, bent from heaven, would pine
To trace the scarred lines written upon mine.
What matter! In the furrows plough'd by care,
Let age tread after, sowing immortal seeds!
All this world's harvest yields, wheat, tares, and weeds,
Is reap'd; 'neath God's stern sky my field lies bare.

But in the night-time, 'tween me and the stars
The angel faces still come floating by,
No death-pale shadow, no averted eye
Marking the inevitable doom that bars
Me from them. Not a cloud their aspect mars;
And my sick spirit walks with them hand in hand.
By the cool waters of a pleasant land;
Sings with them o'er again, without its jars,
The psalm of life that ceas'd when one by one
Their voices sank, and left my voice alone,
With dull monotonous wail, to grieve the air;
Turns glad from each to the other, still to find
Its own—'I love thee!' echoed close and kind;
—Moon glimmerings, bridging the black sea, Despair!

Ay, angel faces! So I ever deemed
Their human likeness; so I see them now!
God laid his visible signet on each brow,
And they were holy, even as they seem'd.
Then, though all earth and hell itself had schem'd
To lure them from me by divided road,
One goal remains for all—the throne of God;
And I shall find them there! Not vain I dream'd,
My sainted ones! my glorious ones! my lov'd
And lost ones! from my famish'd sight remov'd
A little while, lest I might worship ye,
And forget heaven. Sure as at God's White Throne
All whom He loves one living union own,
My angel faces there will shine on me.

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* The above is abridged from the French of T. H. Berthoud.